

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-27. (Canceled)

28. (Currently Amended) A method for managing network address translation (NAT) connections over a network, comprising:

storing a plurality of NAT connection data in a data store;

for each stored NAT connection datum, assigning each of a plurality of different data structure types to the same stored NAT connection datum, wherein each of the plurality of different data structure types are based on at least one of an IP address or a port number;

receiving a request for a NAT connection datum, wherein the request includes an IP address and port number;

automatically determining one of the plurality of different data structure types best suited to the NAT connection datum; and

employing the determined data structure type to retrieve the requested NAT connection datum.

29. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 28, further comprising:

identifying a key in the request for the NAT connection datum;

dividing the key into segments; and

employing each segment to search one of the plurality of different data structure types to locate the requested NAT connection datum.

30. (Currently Amended) A server array controller for managing network connections between a client and a plurality of servers, comprising:

a storage component that stores a plurality of connection data objects in a data store;

a first object retrieval component that is configured to employ a first data structure type to retrieve each of the plurality of connection data objects from the data store;

a second object retrieval component that is configured to employ a second data structure type to retrieve each of the plurality of connection data objects from the data store, wherein the second data structure type is different from the first data structure type;

third data retrieval means for retrieving each of the plurality of connection data objects by selecting one of the first data retrieval means or second data retrieval means based on a request for a connection data object.